

Vocational Rehabilitation Advisory Council  
Smyrna Rest Stop  
5500 DuPont Highway  
Smyrna, DE 19977  
Meeting Minutes  
April 8, 2019  
10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

**Members Present:** Darryl Garner, Chair; Suzanne Howell, Vice Chair; Kevin McAllister, Member

**Teleconference:** Jaqueline Poquette, Member

**Division for the Visually Impaired:** Jill Morrison, Constituent Relations; Debbie Talley, Director of Communications; Lisa Edmondson, Administrative Specialist

**Call to Order:** Darryl Garner, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:08 a.m.

**Meeting Minutes:** Due to a lack of quorum the minutes from the previous meeting were not approved.

**Motion:** Kevin McAllister moved that the Council continue with this meeting with the current members present for April 8, 2019. Suzanne Howell seconded the motion and the Council voted to continue with the meeting. Motion carried.

**Old Business:** Sunset Committee hearing was held Tuesday April 2, 2019. Kevin McAllister and Suzanne Howell were present for the hearing and stated that Elisha Jenkins, Director, Division for the Visually Impaired, made a presentation. There was also testimony from members of the blind/visually impaired community. Council comments included the Sunset process needs to change; public comments were from different perspectives/experiences; DVI inundated the Sunset Committee by submitting 600 pages of supporting documents without the VRAC prior review; and, they would like to understand the timeline and next steps in the Sunset process. DVI explained that the supporting documents were compiled as directed and totaled nearly 600 pages because the Division was required to submit three years of all requested documents. In addition, DVI believes the supporting documents and next steps will be posted on the Sunset Committee website and legislators will continue to receive written public comments.

**Action Item:** Debbie Talley will send power point presentation to Jaqueline Poquette.

**BEP Program:** The Blind Enterprise Program (BEP) was discussed. DVI explained that the Randolph Sheppard Act includes a provision allowing the Act to be implemented in each state and Delaware's code limits state contract access to state office buildings. BEP's goal is to create/expand legislation mirrored after the Randolph Sheppard Act to include other entities such as DelDot and school buildings. The agency cannot introduce any new legislation until the Sunset process has completed. Council members are encouraged to attend Blind Vendors Committee (BVC) meetings to answer questions about the BEP. BVC meets the fourth Thursday of the month.

**VRAC Retreat:** Darryl Garner will coordinate with Elisha Jenkins, Director of DVI, to determine when the retreat can be held. The retreat benefits the Council and the public. The retreat is the best vehicle to coordinate with DVI to review the State Plan and collaborate with DVI to provide feedback.

**Action Item:** DVI will provide Council with due date for the State Plan.

**Action Item:** Council is looking for feedback from previous agenda items that are still outstanding. The Council wants to see a chart that shows the length of time individuals have been in the VR Program.

**Dover Days:** VRAC Chair reported that William McCafferty volunteered to assist with Dover Days. Debbie Talley explained that Dover Days is not a viable option. The first year was in partnership with Blindsight Delaware and Vision to Learn (VTL). VTL brought their mobile eye clinic which drew a lot of attention. The second and third years showed a consecutive decline in community interest.

**White Cane Safety Day:** Debbie Talley informed the Council that she is the DVI contact for White Cane Safety Day in October but will not begin planning until after all the Healthy Vision Month and summer activities are over.

**Healthy Vision Family Night:** The May 15th event is held in partnership with the Delaware Children's Museum (DCM). This is the third year for this event. So far there are 10 exhibitors offering vision and community resources. DVI encourages vendors to include children-friendly exhibits and invited members of the VRAC to participate.

**VRAC Report:** Jill Morrison sent a draft of the VRAC report for FFY 2018 to the Council Chair on March 22<sup>nd</sup>. Kevin McAllister pointed out that Alice Coleman was not listed as the WIOA representative and that Suzanne Howell was not the Chair until FFY 2019. DVI and Council will collaborate to develop milestones throughout the year so that the State Report can be written over the course of the year. Report is due at the end of the calendar year.

**Action Item:** DVI will ensure the VRAC members and Chair on the report are accurately represented for FY2018.

**Action Item:** Council will provide comments/questions regarding the 2018 VRAC Report to RSA and the Governor by Friday, April 19, 2019.

**Action Item:** Council agreed that Kevin McAllister and Suzanne Howell will co-author the Letter from the Chair to be completed by April 19, 2019.

**New Business:** Council needs to do some concentrated recruiting efforts to fill vacant positions. Council suggested asking VR Counselors to discuss vacancies with consumers and offer them the opportunity to sit on the Council. Jaqueline Poquette stated that the VRAC meetings conflict with SRC quarterly meetings. Ms. Poquette suggested the possibility of changing the meeting day to make the opportunity to sit on the Council more attractive.

**Reports from DVI:** Two new VR counselors joined the DVI team on April 1, 2019. One is a transition counselor and one is an adult counselor.

12 placements to date this year.

VR, ILS and Education are working to coordinate and develop transition programs and work-based learning opportunities for transition students.

Spring Break week is this month. VR and O&M teams have begun working with the city and county to ensure that our students are participating in the Summer Youth Employment Program.

The VR Staff are working with various community action programs in southern Kent and Sussex counties to provide opportunities for students in those counties.

DVI is hosting a visually impaired student intern who is testing various assistive technology and researching products.

The Independent Living Advisory Committee meeting was held on March 12, 2019 and Melodye May provided program updates.

The Statewide Independent Living Council met on March 21, 2019 to discuss the State Plan for Independent Living which includes a technical amendment for fiscal year 2020.

On March 22, 2019 the workshop "All About the Echo" was held at the Biggs Building as well as by teleconference. There were 11 attendees and included a video created by a user who was blind sharing all the tasks he uses his Echo for. Participants discussed a variety of functions they use the Amazon Echo for including alarms, timers, entertainment, games, news and weather.

On March 27, 2019, ILS attended the Absalom Jones Senior Center Health Fair.

On April 3, 2019 ILS also presented at the 55 Plus Expo at Dover Downs in the Stonegates Health Fair.

A new O&M Specialist joined the DVI team on March 4, 2019. The O&M team are scheduling several events to provide more opportunities for students to develop their skills such as job shadowing, group outings utilizing public transportation and assisting with the preparation for the Summer Youth Employment Program and other programming being offered by DVI. VRAC Chair discussed an issue brought to his attention by a constituent who was not at the meeting. It was reported that O&M is not offered in the evening when consumers work in the evening.

**Action Item:** Jill Morrison will ensure Director receives comments.

The RFP for the food trucks is being re-posted to encourage more interest since only one bid was received.

DVI and the Division of Public Health are the recipients of the Lt. Governor's 2019 Challenge for Healthy Living award from Lt. Governor Bethany Hall-Long for the Healthy Vending Initiative.

Sunset Hearing was held on April 2, 2019 and DVI wants to thank everyone for all thoughts and opinions expressed during this process.

**VR Report:** Shirley Bryson sent out the VR report to the Council in advance of the meeting.

Council requests report on survey results. Council requests workshop regarding Survey Monkey. DVI informed Council members that the technology team recently conducted workshops about using Survey Monkey with JAWS. Council also suggests using a neutral, third party to collect surveys.

**Action Item:** Debbie Talley will send Survey Monkey link to Jaqueline Poquette.

**Next Meeting:** The next VRAC meeting will be held May 13, 2019 at 10:00 a.m. at the Smyrna State Service Center.

**Meeting Adjournment:** Darryl Garner, Chair adjourned the meeting at 11:37 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Edmondson

Administrative Specialist I

Division for the Visually Impaired

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